

FAQ

State Standards

What are standards?

Standards describe what students need to know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. They explain the knowledge, concepts, and skills that each student should acquire at each grade level so that Wyoming students are both career and college ready by the time they graduate high school.

Standards do not define all that can or should be taught; they simply outline end-of-year expectations for all students to help create equal opportunities to learn regardless of where the student lives.

What subjects have state standards?

Wyoming has adopted standards in the following content areas: literacy, math, science, social studies, fine and performing arts, foreign language, health education, physical education, and career/vocation training.

Literacy standards identify what students should know, understand, and be able to do in reading, writing, research, listening, and speaking skills. To do so, students must comprehend and evaluate complex text, write a variety of expressive and expository pieces, and use listening and speaking skills for a variety of audiences at each grade level.

Math standards are designed to build a strong mathematical base of understanding for further study in college and career training. A working understanding of concepts such as numbers and quantity, algebraic functions, geometry, mathematical modeling, and statistics are built upon each other as the student advances towards graduation.

Defining the Terminology

Standards

Standards aim to provide all Wyoming students an equal, quality education. They try to define what Wyoming students should know and be able to do.

Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS)

PAWS is the state test used in grades 3-8 to measure student performance for both the state and national accountability systems. Subjects on the PAWS include reading, math, and science (science is tested in grades 4 and 8 only).

FAQ State Standards (cont'd)

Are standards the same as curriculum?

No. Local districts, schools, and classrooms control and design curriculum, select textbooks, and write lesson plans. Basically, they retain control over how the standards are met. Standards influence curriculum as the standards define what will be tested and curriculum are designed to prepare students in tested areas.

What is curriculum?

Curriculum refers to the methods and materials used to deliver instruction related to the standards. Textbooks, worksheets, lab kits, novels, software programs, and so on are used by teachers to deliver instruction related to a given content area.

Who has authority over curriculum and instruction?

Decisions related to curriculum and instruction are made by local school boards, district and building administrators, and teachers.

Who adopts standards and how often are standards revised?

State law requires that standards are reviewed every five years by a committee of teachers, business members, community members, and parents. The State Board of Education (SBE) is charged with reviewing and adopting state standards. In 2012, the SBE adopted the Common Core State Standards for literacy and math.

Will there be changes in other subjects?

Yes. The State Board of Education adopted new content standards for foreign language and fine & performing arts in November 2013. Pending public comment, State Board approval, and the governor's signature, changes in social studies, career/vocational ed, and physical education standards will be adopted.

How will new standards affect testing?

To effectively measure the new language arts and math standards, the tests used to measure them must also be revised when new standards are adopted. This means that the statewide test, PAWS, has changes in its content that reflect what's currently being taught, and in what grades it's taught. With these sorts of changes, an adjustment in how the tests results are reported must also be made.

Who has authority over the implementation of the state standards?

The implementation of the state standards, including curriculum choices and instructional methods, are determined by local school boards, district and building administrators, and teachers.